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An Independent Voice for

United Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Concerns
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Celebrating Jeanne Barnett

We Mourn the Loss of Jeanne Barnett, But Her Work Lives On

Longtime Affirmation member Jeanne Barnett passed away peacefully Oct. 1, 2003. A heart attack and complications from diabetes took her from us. Her memorial service was held at St. Mark United Methodist Church in Sacramento, CA Saturday, Oct. 11, while our National Affirmation Council met at Drew University, Madison, NJ. Randy Miller, a former Co-spokesperson was the Council's representative for Affirmation.

Co-spokesperson Peggy R. Gaylord reflected on knowing Jeanne and Ellie. "While they are probably best known for their very public holy union service almost five years ago performed by 150 lay and clergy members (see www.umaffirm.com) and Jeanne being known as the Lesbian on the UMC General Conference Study Committee on Homosexuality, the sole gay-identified



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Prophetic Voice Planned at GC 2004

By Gary Shephard
When I talk about what "we" are doing at GC 2004, most of the time I'm not talking about just us, just Affirmation. I'm talking about our coalition for GC 2004: Common Witness. There will be the usual suspects. Because of the risk to the structure of the church this year, the coali-

tion is working to bring in other partners as well.

Affirmation is trying to put together a joint worship service with the Confessing Movement. (If that doesn't get your attention, nothing will.) So far it's slow going. If they decide to not go ahead with it we'll do the

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Help Us Prepare for GC
To prepare for General Conference next year, we ask all our readers to update their contact information by sending us an email. So please communicate with us this month.

Please send your name, email address, postal address including zip code and phone number to UMAffirmation@yahoo.com. Put "Update Database" in the subject line. Our Database Manager thanks you.

In Jeanne's Own Words, 1992

From St. Mark UMC's weekly *Markings*

(edited by Peggy R. Gaylord)

....I was a member of our denominational Committee to Study Homosexuality. I was one of the presenters of this report at General Conference...

The headlines read, "Methodists Reaffirm Policy on Gays." On May 11, the significant vote was on a motion to change the Discipline (our book of rules). This motion was defeated: "Yes" 372 and "No" 594. The condemning language was retained. When this voting was finished, the delegates were led in singing "Standing On the Promises," joyously and celebratively. I thought, standing on the bodies of gay men and lesbians. When that hymn finished, the Affirmation folks stood and sang, "We Shall Overcome Someday." Slowly throughout the hall others stood and joined in.

Monday night in the Affirmation hospitality room, many folks gathered to hold on to one another, cry and express anger. Parents of a gay son from Chicago were there. The mother wiping away tears said, "I thought we might change it this time." A lesbian, who has

a church job and is closeted, in tears said to me, "Don't quit, you have to keep working." A young man from the local area explained that the local Affirmation group of five could not find a Louisville UMC in which to meet. The next day a clergy woman from Missouri told us, "I wanted to call my gay brother last night and tell him the church had changed. I couldn't." Then sobbing, "I don't know what to tell him now."

I have heard some people say it doesn't make any difference, we welcome all persons. It clearly does make a difference in the lives of thousands of United Methodists who are homosexual, their parents, family, loved ones, and friends....

A question I have been asked...is, "Are you going to stay in the church?" It is always interesting, first, that I am asked that question. I am a multi-generation Methodist. Why should I leave?

...I hear in that question some understanding of the personal pain a homosexual person goes through in staying in the church. The real question is:

"When the church is so oppressive and inflicts such pain on homosexual persons, why do you stay?" Do you go to church to receive pain? to be named as less than fully human? to be denied full participation? No, I go to church to be enriched in faith and to be a participant in the community of believers. I go to church as a witness within the community of faith that the church's position is wrong.

...I hear that question from allies, heterosexual folks who believe the church is wrong and must change its position. Homosexual persons cannot change the church's position. We are not a majority, not elected delegates; therefore, we are denied opportunity to speak...So we stay and join with others who share the vision of a fully inclusive and welcoming church for all people, including gay/lesbian/bisexual[/transgender] persons....

If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we should find in each [person's] life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm any hostility.

- Henry Wadsworth

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRESSIVE UM'S GENERAL CONFERENCE 2004 – PITTSBURGH, PA – April 27 – May 7

Volunteer opportunities abound for progressive United Methodists who care about the future of the church and are willing and able to attend General Conference in Pittsburgh. Once again, Affirmation: United Methodists for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Concerns, the Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA), and the Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN) will be coordinating housing and volunteer activities. Many plans are still being worked out. This form represents a preliminary indicator of your interests. Let us know of your interests by checking as many boxes as apply. As more information becomes available it will be forwarded to you. Thanks.

ADVOCACY

Prior to GC:

- ☐ writing and editing petitions
- ☐ developing position papers
- ☐ analyzing legislation once Daily Christian Advocate comes out with all petitions (early 2004)

During Week One at GC:

- ☐ monitor progress of legislation in legislative committees
- ☐ participate in evening debriefings

During Week Two of GC:

- ☐ Monitor progress of legislation as it comes to the plenary session and be available to help with minority reports and/or talking points for progressive delegates.

CELEBRATION/WORSHIP

Willing to help with:

- ☐ Daily RMN communion services at noon on weekdays during GC
- ☐ Parents Reconciling Network Breakfast on Saturday Morning (5/1/04)
- ☐ MFSA Ball Award Event on Saturday Evening (5/1/04) with the Montana Logging and Ballet Company
- ☐ Sunday afternoon Reconciling Worship Service (5/2/04)
- ☐ Affirmation Worship service – time as yet to be determined

INFORMATION

Interested in:

- ☐ gathering information for publications
- ☐ writing articles
- ☐ doing layout
- ☐ editing

Interested in working on:

- ☐ MFSA Daily Social Questions Bulletin

- ☐ Affirmation – Daily Newsletter

- ☐ Press Releases and other miscellaneous written material

Willing to do logistical work of:

- ☐ getting newsletters and other information printed (usually late night task)
- ☐ distributing information (usually a very early morning task)

WITNESS

Witness activities are in the planning stage as local logistics inform some activities. Indicate, however, if you are willing to consider participating in witness events such as Affirmation's Silent Witness at GC 2000.

- ☐ Willing to consider participating in witness activities

OFFICE COVERAGE

- ☐ Helping to provide office coverage

HOSPITALITY

Helping to prepare and serve meals:

- ☐ Breakfast at Progressive Delegates' Briefing
- ☐ Low cost lunches
- ☐ Helping staff office
- ☐ Staffing Hospitality Center (including sale of materials)

CARE

- ☐ Providing pastoral care for volunteers and delegates
- ☐ Serving as "go-fers" for delegates including doing laundry, picking up prescriptions, etc.

ONGOING FAITHFULNESS

Throughout 2004, RMN will sponsor local events for Reconciling UM's across the country, gathering in local settings for community, celebration, support and encouragement to "be the church" regardless of GC decisions. Likewise MFSA will be planning the next **Voices of Faith** gathering for progressive Christians in 2005.

- ☐ I will organize/attend a RUM (Reconciling UMs) event in my area

- ☐ Please add me to the planning committee for MFSA's **Voices of Faith Conference 2005**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Day Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____ Annual Conference: _____

Mail to: **MFSA**
212 E Capitol St. NE
Washington, DC 20003-1036

Or Fax to: 202-546-6811

Length of Stay:

Number of Days You Hope to Be Present at General Conference _____
☐ Week One ☐ Week Two

Primary Affiliation:

- ☐ Affirmation
- ☐ MFSA
- ☐ RMN
- ☐ Other

Celebrating Jeanne Barnett

Continued from Page 1

voice until Bill Kent was later added, Jeanne and Ellie were very private people even though they were very active in Affirmation for years. These public 'demonstrations' seemed out of character for them.

"However, they were always involved in a significant way even though often more behind the scenes. About the time that I first became heavily involved with Affirmation in the late 80's, Jeanne and Ellie were becoming the National Coordinators of the Regional Organizers.

"Ellie later served as Treasurer and Jeanne was Co-spokesperson for a period of time after her stint on the Study Committee. They were involved in many leadership roles for us; they've been wonderful contributors of their time, energy and financial resources. I know they were also very involved in their local Affirmation, and active members in their local church and on the church conference (regional) level in addition to these other roles.

"But, as Anita Creamer of The Sacramento Bee wrote: 'Ultimately, life doesn't come down to political statements, no matter how groundbreaking; it comes down to love. Barnett and Charlton were partners for 20 years.'"

Affirmation has set up a memorial fund in Jeanne Barnett's name to be used for current and emerging issues. Any contributions may be sent to The Jeanne Barnett Memorial Fund, c/o Affirmation, P.O. Box 1021, Evanston, IL 60204.

The National Affirmation Council has scheduled its next meeting in the Sacramento area in order to join in the 5-year Anniversary Celebration of Jeanne Barnett's and Ellie Charlton's Holy Union. The purpose of this celebration is to reflect upon the progress over the years and look to the future, as well as recognize the impact one such witness event can have upon the church. The day-long event will be Jan. 17, 2004, starting at 10 am.

According to the Rev. Don Fado, "Jeanne and Ellie saw the anniversary cel-

ebration to be, not about them, but about what has happened in the last five years in the movement toward full inclusion for LGBT persons in the church and where we go from here. Among Jeanne's last words to Ellie was the request to go ahead with the anniversary celebration and that we will do."

For more details, please contact Rev. Fado at [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED] Sacramento, CA.

"HOPE AND HEALING: SURVIVING IN THE WILDERNESS"

This is the theme of the retreat Affirmation is planning for members and constitutents — a time of sabbath and renewal together — to follow the General Conference 2004 experience and strengthen our witness into the future.

Watch for an early 2004 announcement of site and leader(s). Hold the date — Oct. 8-10, 2004.

Our Prophet Voice Continues

Continued from Page 1

worship service ourselves.

We're organizing a letter writing campaign aimed at the delegates that have been identified as moderates.

We're pulling together a new and improved Silent Witness protest. People continue to die because of their gender, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation. The Silent Witness thing moved a lot of people in 2000.

We want to tell the stories of United Methodists that felt a call to ministry but have gone elsewhere to answer the call because our church won't welcome them. We want to tell the stories of United Methodist dollars spent in our seminaries for persons that went elsewhere for ordination because they couldn't find it here.

We want to tell the stories of persons who might have been serving in the United Methodist church but have been defrocked because of who they are, all those persons selling tires at Wards, or water heaters at Sears, or programming mainframe computers at

insurance companies in Texas. (I'm working on that programmer in Texas. He's writing newsletter articles for the GC 2004 daily newsletter. It'll be a riveting read.)

We're planning to start an oral history project. We want to present the first set of those stories at GC. As a movement we have a tremendous number of stories to tell. We also want to collect oral histories at GC.

We want to tell the stories of institutionalized spiritual violence and show how lives have been damaged, and how lives have been ended. We need to tell the church, "For some of you this is just some annoyance, some issue, some people that are getting on your nerves. We, however, live and suffer and die by the violence of your actions and inactions! We're driven away from the church that baptized us and confirmed our faith!"

We want to have a prayer vigil at GC, 24/7.

We want to put together a daily meditation book as a

spiritual resource for what we know will be rough times at GC. As anyone who's ever been through it will tell you it's like having your nerves scraped raw every day for two weeks. (Not that I still wake up screaming, or anything.)

There will of course be much legislation put in by our friends and our enemies. We'll be tracking it.

We'll be putting out a daily General Conference newsletter as we have for many General Conferences.

And of course, we'll be modeling the inclusive church we hope the UMC to become. That's the most important thing. We're going to go to GC 2004 and be the church we want our church to be. Look for volunteer opportunities on page 3. Join our Prophetic Witness.

The aim of an argument or discussion should not be victory, but progress.

*Joseph Joubert,
essayist (1754-1824)*

GC 2004 And Our Prophetic Witness: Embracing Insanity

By Gary Shephard,
Known Affirmation Loony

On the one hand Albert Einstein said, "Insanity is endlessly repeating the same process and hoping for a different result." On the other hand Winston Churchill said "Success is going from failure to failure without a loss of enthusiasm."

After the disappointment of GC 2000 some of us left the church – burned out, disgusted, and emotionally injured. We lost friends and allies after 1992 and 1996 as well. Each person has their own capacity for the tedious job of trying to open up the church. When we've hit that limit for the sake of our own sanity it's time to move on.

And yet what of the infants now being baptized? What of the children coming up through our Sunday Schools, Vacation Bible Schools, UMYF that know they're different? That go to the Bible and find frightening words? That hear frightening words from their parents, and their friends, and their youth

leaders? From the pulpit on Sunday morning? Even, if they have the patience to read it, the Discipline?

Who will speak the words of comfort and reassurance they need to hear? Who will tell them, "Our church has it wrong!"

Who will raise a voice for those who are called to preach God's word, but are told by our Discipline that they're not good enough? Who will object when legislation is put forth saying that they're unstable, not suitable to be preachers of the word?

Who will raise a voice for those with LGBT family members who are afraid to come out about their family for fear they'll lose the support of the church they love? Who will raise a voice for the mother that lost a gay son to AIDS but twelve years later still suffers in silence? Who will cry "Shame! You have failed as a church!" for her? Who will give voice to her grief? Who will be the church for her?

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National Council

John R. Calhoun
South Central Jurisdiction
Oklahoma City, OK
[REDACTED]

Ms. Jay Campbell
South Central Jurisdiction
Houston, TX
[REDACTED]

Diane DeLap
At-Large
Wilmington, MA
[REDACTED]

Rev. Peggy R. Gaylord,
Co-Spokesperson
At-Large
Binghamton, NY
[REDACTED]

Walt Jackson
North Central Jurisdiction
Madison, WI
[REDACTED]

Kathryn Mitchem, Co-Convener
Southeast Jurisdiction

Clarence R. (Rusty) Norment
At-Large
Mechanicsville, VA
[REDACTED]

Jim Palmquist
At-Large
Macungie, PA
[REDACTED]

Rev. Kenneth I. Rowe,
Co-Spokesperson
Western Jurisdiction
San Francisco, CA
[REDACTED]

Gary Shephard, Co-Convener
At-Large
Haslet, TX
[REDACTED]

Rev. Judy WestLee,
Newsletter Editor
Minneapolis, MN
[REDACTED]

Plans for Paying Our GC '04 Costs Detailed

*By Jim Palmquist,
Fund Development Chairperson*

Affirmation has been working on GC 2004 since before February 2002. Our Lynx and Program Committees have proposed, staffed and developed 15 strategies to "open hearts" and address our issues with the United Methodist Church. Elsewhere in this newsletter is a place to reserve hotel rooms with other like-minded activists at Affirmation and our partner organizations (see page 12). Also there is a place in this newsletter to volunteer to be involved in the Affirmation activities at General Conference (see page 3) And we have allowed space for the Holy Spirit to guide us and open opportunities to witness to our Truth to the leadership of the UMC at GC 2004.

The Affirmation Council has fully discussed our GC 2004 strategies and has launched the efforts we have planned. Many of our strategies need funding to underwrite them. In addition, we are again sharing the cost of common rooms at GC 2004 with our partner organizations. These rooms will be used for worship, delegate briefings, meals, hospitality, volunteer coordinating, daily debriefing and office space. Our plans to raise sufficient funds to underwrite our programs at GC 2004 include:

- A solicitation in this newsletter for GC 2004 contributions.
- A Winter mailing to our membership.
- A major gifts solicitation of our key underwriting members and friends.
- A solicitation in the next newsletter.

Though the financial needs are significant, our opponents have much larger financial resources than we have. We will raise much less than they will raise, but the Holy Spirit's impact on the church through us will be powerful and exciting. Join us in underwriting this great venture. We are not 'buying' LGBT welcome within the United Methodist Church. We are funding the facilities and events to allow the Holy Spirit to open hearts and speak to hardened hearts of God's love for all.

Join us today to begin our fundraising for GC 2004 with a tax-deductible gift now. And sign up to be at GC 2004 for this witness (see page 3 for many volunteer opportunities). Make a contribution today to this great venture! Thank you.

Contact me [REDACTED] if you have suggestions about giving to this effort.

Embracing Insanity ...

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How many voices have been silenced? How many suffer in silence? How many turn from God because of the spiritual violence of our church? Who will hold the church accountable? Who will tell the church that this is a life and death issue for more people than we'll ever know? Who will tell them that people are dying?

With this inspiration Affirmation and Affirmation's coalition partners go forth with plans for prophetic witness at GC 2004. There will be people who say we're insane. We're endlessly repeating the same process and expecting a different result that's just never going to come. We're a bunch of loonies if we expect the outcome to be different this time.

By that definition, yes, Affirmation is proud to admit insanity. We embrace it. As an organization we will go from failure to failure, enthusiasm undiminished.

When GC 2004 is over we'll measure our *success* not by whether the legislation we

and our coalition partners put forward passed. We won't measure our *failure* by whether any legislation put forth by Good News or the Institute for Religion and Democracy or Confessing Movement passed. We'll measure our success by the witness we provided at GC 2004 and the church we modeled. Prophetic insanity. It works for us. See you there.

Did you see Rev. Janie Spahr at WOW, self-identified Presbyterian, blatantly cross-dressing in a long-sleeved United Methodist Affirmation shirt? Her excuse was that she just had to buy it because her meeting rooms were too cold. If the shirt's good enough for Janie, what about you?

Affirmation Newsletter

This Affirmation newsletter is a quarterly publication. Only Affirmation's elected spokespersons may represent the official positions of this organization. Opinions here signed or unsigned are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent the opinions of Affirmation.

Co-Editors:

Judy WestLee
Gary Shephard

Affirmation's Mission Statement

Affirmation is an activist caucus of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, our families and friends organized to speak for ourselves. Together we:

Proclaim a gospel of respect, love and justice;

Relentlessly pursue policies and processes that support full participation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in all areas and levels of the United Methodist Church:

Overcome the barriers that diminish our common humanity by excluding or judging people because of their race, gender, class or physical abilities;

Empower people to undertake works of inclusion and justice where they are.

That Episcopal Church!

To the chagrin of many and to the delight of many and to the utter disgust of many, the Episcopal church now has an openly gay bishop. Goodness only knows how many **closeted** ones they have. Or how many closeted bishops we have in the UMC, for that matter. Rumors fly but often facts are few. (Just a point of note for those of you UMC late comers who may be wondering, bishop in the UMC is more of an administrative post. It's not a consecration or a level of ordination as it is in some churches. In our church it's a step up from District Superintendent.)

An email came to the Affirmation account just this last week. "I'm writing a research paper," it said. Could you give me any direction on what the consecration of an openly gay bishop in another denomination means for your church?" This was a welcome relief from the unrelenting spam. A real email, requiring a real response. (And, fortunately, a response that didn't include the phrase, "our mission statement does not include debating theology one on one via email.")

I didn't want to disappoint the sender. On the other hand, the sender seemed to think that either I had the ability to see into the future, or that I'm a heck of a lot smarter than I really am. Unfortunately I had to tell the dull, honest truth. "I wish I knew," I responded. "If you asked five different United Methodists you'd probably get at least 13 distinct responses, not counting footnotes, clarifications, and sidebars." It's something we just can't know in advance. The historical analysis, however, will be fascinating.

What **does** it mean? Is there any way to predict or to be certain? Does it mean that the Holy Spirit is moving through the protestant churches and we can expect to see a massive change, slow at first, gathering speed? Does it presage a right-leaning backlash that will leave us smarting for years or decades?

Will it energize the left leaning and give them new strength to call the church to be accountable to all persons without being hampered by ancient texts intended for another time,

another place, a dissimilar situation, a completely different society?

Or will it mobilize the right leaning and lead to new heights of rhetoric about how we're evil and how we're destroying the church and how we're corrupting "classic" Christianity with "secular humanism" or how we're "embracing paganism?" So that "classic" Christianity – would that be the Spanish Inquisition, or the Crusades? I think I'd remember if I'd embraced a paganism or a secular humanism, I really do. Or even a really good looking pagan. But I've digressed into the realm of the very silly.

It will be fascinating in the future to look back at the consecration and see how things changed. It can't **not** change things. Only God knows how it **is** changing and **will** change things. And we'll know too ...eventually.

You have not converted a [person] because you have silenced [them]

- John Morley

A Tribute to Jeanne Barnett

Editor's Note:

On Saturday, Oct. 11, 2003, many friends surrounded Ellie Charlton in celebrating the life of Jeanne Barnett. Our National Affirmation Council was scheduled to meet that weekend at Drew University, Madison, NJ, so we were unable to make the trip to California. When word came of Jeanne's passing and memorial date, we asked Randy Miller, former Co-Spokesperson, to speak on our behalf.

Unfortunately, Randy's car broke down and he was unable to convey publicly our message of gratefulness for Jeanne's life and prayers for Ellie during this time of transition. These are the words he had hoped to deliver.

by Randy Miller

*They are falling all -
around me.*

*They are falling all -
around me.*

*They are falling all -
around me.*

*The best leaves on my tree -
are fallen down.*

I have been asked to say just a few words about our friend, our colleague and fellow sojourner, Jeanne Barnett for both myself and my partner, Glenn Eagleson, and on behalf of the Affirmation Council, the official caucus for lesbians, gays, bisexual and transgender United Methodists. Above all else, Ellie, we would like you to know that though many of them could not be here, at this very moment across the United States, many friends and loved ones are

holding you and Jeanne in a moment of silence and if you were to rise up from this place on angel's wings, you would be uplifted by a mighty current of love and held in our warm embrace. Be assured that in this moment of need neither you nor Jeanne are forgotten, nor what you gave to us taken granted.

As I talked with others about what Jeanne gave to us, the same themes kept emerging. In the late 80's and early 90's, there were not many of us who had the patience or ability to work for the liberation of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people and stay active in the United Methodist Church on the local, annual, and national levels. I do not know what it cost her, but Jeanne was one of those few, serving both on the national Affir-

mation council and in positions of leadership in this annual conference and in the larger Church. In particular, I remember her patience, her thoughtfulness and care through four long years of service on the United Methodist Study Committee on Homosexuality. And I will not forget her forbearance when she spoke to General Conference and watched much of that effort go down to defeat. I remember her laughter and the twinkle in her eye when she and Ellie were in the midst of those other wonderful women of Affirmation.

As I have said before, perhaps that the greatest part of Jeanne's strength was that at first glance one might overlook the fact

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Tribute ...

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that she was and is a warrior for justice and liberation. If one were exceedingly foolish one might miss her strength of will and her determination to leave the world a better place. In heaven, I imagine her standing beside Jesus, waiting patiently as he finished one of his long glowing and inspiring speeches and then tapping him on the shoulder in her pragmatic and determined way to remind him that those loaves and fishes were not going to multiply themselves. That miracle or no, we needed a plan for distributing all of that wine - to everyone... Though it is often overlooked, this is sometimes the stuff of which our she-ros are made.

The last part of the Sweet Honey in the Rock/Holly Near song that I opened with goes like this:

*I will try to sing my song
right*

*I will try to sing my song
right*

*I will try to sing my song
right*

It is your path I walk

It is your song I sing

*The best leaves from my
tree - are moving
on...*

We Honor History, Look Toward GC '04

by Peggy Gaylord

The National Council met Oct. 10-13 in Madison, NJ at the Drew University United Methodist Archives and History Center.

Rev. Kenneth E. Rowe, Retired Drew Archivist and Affirmation's designated Historian, addressed the need for concern about collecting information related to our history. Rowe advised: "If you don't have the records, the historians can't write about it."

The Program Committee consulted with Dale Patterson, Archivist, with the General Commission on Archives and History of the UMC. An outline was drafted for the new Oral History Project. The project will record the life experiences of leaders in the struggle for full inclusion of LGBT Christians in the UMC.

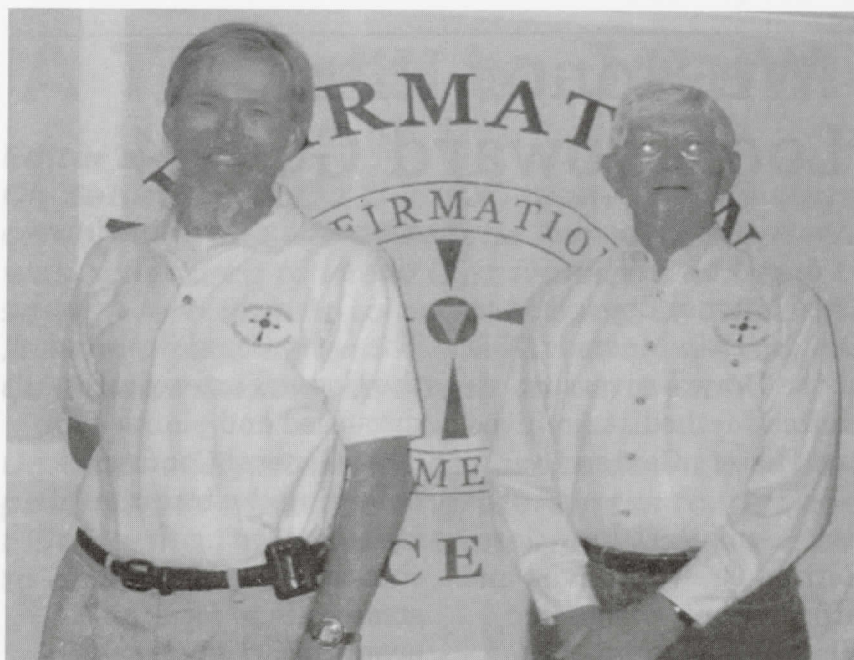
Patterson also presented a workshop, "Oral History—You Can Help It Happen!!!" at the Chatham UMC. He discussed how one can become an integral part of preserving oral history by

conducting/recording interviews.

The Lynx Committee and the Council extensively discussed and planned for 2004 General Conference. Following the tradition of modeling "being the church" since 1980, the strategy is to focus on events or activities which can "open hearts," as Affirmation continues its witness to the church's need to fully include lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex persons, and their families and friends.

Affirmation will shortly be soliciting information on suicides or homicides of any LGBT United Methodist people, as we make the point that this is a "life or death" issue for many, not just an issue of church membership privileges.

The Council met for reflection and brainstorming for the future with other coalition members representing the Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN) and Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA).



Shirts - Short Sleeve Polo or Long Sleeve Denim- We've got both! Council members Gary Shephard (left) and Rusty Norment model them. Go to www.umaffirm.org to order.

Reserve Pittsburgh Motel Now

Join Affirmation at General Conference 2004 in Pittsburgh from April 26 to May 8. General Conference is where we most visibly model church and it is the place to be next year. It is a spiritual, physical, emotional and intellectual experience you will never forget. Make your reservation early to be sure you get a room at the place where progressive United Methodists will be staying and working.

Hotel: Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites Pittsburgh South Side - Toll-Free: 1-800-HOLIDAY - <http://www.ichotelsgroup.com> - 20 S 10 St., Pittsburgh, PA 15203

Pricing: We have a special negotiated rate of \$94 plus tax per night, regardless of the number of occupants in the room. We can have up to five people in each room. Each room has a hide away couch/bed and either a king or two queen size beds.

To make a reservation at the negotiated rate: Call the Holiday Inn Express at 1-412-488-1130 and mention the group name MFSA. Affirmation, RMN and MFSA worked together to set up this housing arrangement.

How to find a roommate: To get a roommate(s) to share expenses, email your information to HousingGC04@aol.com. We will help you find a roommate.

We have a limited number of rooms at the negotiated rate. Book early! We understand that you can get your deposit back if you end up not being able to go to GC. Confirm that when you make your reservation. Hotel space is at a premium in Pittsburgh.

See you in Pittsburgh!